

costs incurred in connection with a surveyor or engineer for a successful request to be removed from the special hazard flood area to the Director. This does not include legal services incurred by the resident.

It is my hope that this legislation will allow communities to work more effectively with FEMA to ensure that residents are given sufficient, fair, and timely notice if they are required to purchase flood insurance and to ensure that homeowners are not held financially liable when a change in a community's flood insurance rate map does not affect their property. With original cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, I hope we can see this common sense solution come to fruition.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JOSEPH M. HOEFFEL

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. HOEFFEL. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take a moment to explain my absence from the House on Saturday, May 26. After the Senate passed its version of the tax cut bill on Wednesday of that week, the Senate version and the House version were sent to conference committee to produce a compromise final bill that both houses would vote on.

Following Senate passage, most observers expected the conference report to be ready for a final vote on Thursday, or at the very latest on Friday. However, negotiations dragged on with members receiving only periodic, gloomy updates. Finally, an agreement was announced late Friday night. I spent the entire night in my office waiting for a vote that was promised by 2 or 3 a.m. No vote was called.

At 8 a.m. Saturday, I boarded an Amtrak train to attend my son's graduation from the Hill School in Pottstown, PA later in the morning. This was the last train that I could take and still make my son's graduation. The House voted on the bill about two hours after I left Washington. I apologize to my constituents for not being able to vote on what I believe to be a very flawed tax bill, but I believe the vast majority will understand why I chose not to be there.

Had I been present to vote, I would have voted against the tax bill. Not because I don't think there should be a tax cut, but because this one is simply too big, is heavily tilted to the wealthy, is filled with fiscal gimmicks, and threatens to plunge this country back into deficit spending.

I support an immediate rebate to the American people, and actually supported a larger rebate than was in the bill from the outset of the tax debate. I also conceptually support several other items in the tax cut such as fixing the marriage penalty, reforming the estate tax and providing tuition tax credits. However this bill simply went overboard and threatens the fiscal discipline we have shown over the last several years.

The folly of this tax cut will be shown as the President tries to pay for items like increased defense spending and education reforms that he has not accounted for in the budget, and for years to come as the tax cut is fully

phased in and scarce revenue is needed to meet our national retirement and health care obligations to the growing number of older Americans.

IDENTITY THEFT LEGISLATION

HON. DARLENE HOOLEY

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Ms. HOOLEY of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, four months ago, a little boy in Salem, Oregon named Tyler Benton Bales lost his battle with a rare genetic disease called Hurler Syndrome. Although I never had the pleasure of knowing him, Tyler was somewhat of a celebrity in Salem. In fact, he was the subject of a front page article in the Salem Statesman Journal last December, when a silent auction was held to raise money to offset the cost of an expensive bone marrow transplant that was his only chance to beat Hurler Syndrome. Unfortunately, Tyler's heart wasn't strong enough to survive the rigors of his transplant and chemotherapy. He was only sixteen months old when he passed away.

Mr. Speaker, there's nothing more tragic than losing a child. My heart goes out to Tyler's parents, and to all the other parents of children who suffer from Hurler Syndrome. Unfortunately, the heartache of Tyler's loss hasn't eased for his parents. As if it's not hard enough losing your sixteen month old child, the Bales recently learned—courtesy of the Internal Revenue Service—that someone is claiming Tyler as a dependent on their 2000 income tax return. As disturbing as that is, it gets worse.

Because of disclosure issues, the IRS won't give out the name of the identity thief to the Salem Police Department, even though identity theft is a felony offense in Oregon. The thief could live right down the street or 3,000 miles away—but if the IRS has its way, the Bales—and the Salem Police Department—will never know who stole their son's personal information.

Mr. Speaker, we can't even begin to imagine the anguish this family is going through. Tyler Benton Bales was so much more than a name, a date of birth, and a Social Security number—he was a little boy who was surrounded by love during his brief time with us. His parents—and the countless of other people who loved him—should not see his memory dishonored by a common thief whose identity is actually being protected by the IRS. That's why I'm introducing the ID Theft Loophole Closure Act. This legislation simply requires the IRS to furnish the name, Social Security number, and address of a suspected identity thief to state and local law enforcement agencies for the exclusive purpose of locating that individual.

Identity Theft is not a victimless crime. We must cut through the red tape that is preventing this and other thieves from being prosecuted for their crimes, and I believe this legislation is the right tool for the job. I urge my colleagues to support the ID Theft Loophole Closure Act.

RECOGNIZING GOMBE STATE, NIGERIA

HON. BOB SCHAFFER

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. SCHAFFER. Mr. Speaker, in April, I visited West Africa as part of the Congressional Delegation led by our Republican Conference Chairman, Mr. WATTS of Oklahoma. Among the most successful components of the delegation's mission was a visit to Nigeria, and, more specifically, a meeting with various Nigerian governors. The meeting took place on April 7th in Abuja, the capital city.

I had the good fortune of being seated beside Governor Alhaji Abubakar Habu Hashidu, the Executive Governor of Gombe State. Our discussions afforded me a more complete understanding of the numerous opportunities for American business investment in the particular region of Nigeria represented by Gov. Hashidu. Regional investments in the education system there, along with infrastructure modernization and utility enhancement suggest a genuine effort to promote foreign investment, particularly among American entrepreneurs. I found Gov. Hashidu to be an earnest spokesman for his state, and sincere in his desire to strengthen friendships between his constituency and the American people.

Mr. Speaker, I retain in my office a full report on the investment potentials of Gombe State, Nigeria. On behalf of this House, I personally received the document directly from Gov. Hashidu. By these remarks, I serve notice of the availability of the report to each of our colleagues as I have already delivered copies to Members who have indicated interest in its contents.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, I hereby submit for the RECORD, the introductory remarks of Gov. Hashidu which accompany the report, and which were presented to the delegation in Abuja. Gov. Hashidu's comments fully summarize his commitment, and that of his government, to economic expansion in Gombe State. His observations should be considered by every Member of Congress and I humbly beg this body's attention in this important matter.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI ABUBAKAR HABU HASHIDU THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF GOMBE STATE DELIVERED TO THE DELEGATION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LED BY REP. JESSY WATTS, JR. ON 7TH APRIL 2001 AT ABUJA

Hon. Members of Congress, let me start by, welcoming this esteemed group of Congress men and women of the United States of America, led by Rep. J.C. Watts, Jr.

Your visit to Nigeria at this crucial time of our democratic experiment is most welcome. Our system of Government which is tailored along the United States Presidential system with both Senate and House of Representatives having their clear Legislative Schedules, has been an interesting experience. The various actors in the new democratic project are committed to the success of the experiment. So far, the three arms of Government have shown tolerance and understanding in the principles of power sharing. The experience has been very stimulating and it has the capacity for that providing opportunities to exploit our potentials. We have recognised this fact and we

are making effort to reap the dividends of democracy.

We in Gombe State are a dynamic group who have been noted for hard work. The State is endowed with abundant agricultural land and adequate water resources for irrigated agriculture. These have provided us with a strong base for food and cash crop production. The main cash crop is cotton. Cotton production has been an age long occupation that was recognised and encouraged by the British Cotton Growing Association with a ginnery established since 1956. All the districts in Gombe State have established cotton markets for a very long time. Cotton production has increased tremendously in the state in recent time due to the positive approach adopted by the new democratic Government. For example, production has improved from 10,000 metric tons in 1999 to 50,000 tons in 2000. Government is planning to boost production to 100,000 tons in 2001.

Beside cotton, Gombe State is endowed with other agricultural raw materials and solid mineral resources. Huge quantities of crops that can adequately be used as raw materials by industry and also be consumed directly by house holds are grown annually in the state. Gombe State has the 2nd largest produce market in the North of Nigeria, second only to Kano, the commercial nerve centre of the North.

There have been various efforts to harness these agricultural produce but we are limited by capital application. Presently, apart from the two privately owned Cotton Gineries in Gombe and the Mango and Tomato processing factory at Kumo, there are no end user industries to utilise these huge quantities of raw materials grown in the State annually. A substantial portion is therefore being sold out and transported daily to other parts of the country for domestic/industrial uses. We therefore need investors to come and invest in this sector in the State.

In terms of Solid Minerals, Gombe State is endowed with over thirty-five (35) different varieties of Solid Minerals which are suspected to exist in large commercial quantities underground all over the State. However, some of these minerals have been explored and are currently being utilised by the few companies.

From the foregoing it is clear, our economic potentials are quite enormous. The only inhibiting factor is lack of industrial base. This is why our Administration is committed to the industrial development of the State. Already the National privatisation exercise has opened the door for potential investors to try their hands in the abundant opportunities in the country. We in Gombe State are eager to receive such investors with generous incentives. For example, Government will provide free land for any genuine investor that is ready to establish a factory here. We shall equally grant such investor a five year tax holiday. These and other generous terms awaits any willing investors(s).

Having mentioned these potentials I foresee a good business future for any investor from the United States who is willing to invest here. We have a dynamic group of dedicated civil servants who are committed to the developmental needs of the young State. The Community is peace loving and industrious. The security situation is excellent. Power supply is very stable and communication is good. When all these are added to the abundant cheap raw materials available. Gombe State would pass the test of any entrepreneur. I therefore urge you to give us a trial I am sure you will be convinced.

Honourable Members of Congress, this is an exciting time for me and the People of Gombe state. A time that provides me the opportunity to present the investment potentials of this young State to the World's biggest economy. As I count on your assistance, I look forward to a dynamic future with huge investments from the United States of America. I therefore urge you to spare a few minutes and scan through this brochure so as to acquaint yourselves with some of our potentials.

Thank you and God Bless.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE GERTRUDE STEIN DEMOCRATIC CLUB

HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise, from time to time, to acknowledge the accomplishments and milestones of the citizens and organizations of the District of Columbia, whom I have the honor to represent in Congress. As a life-long advocate for civil rights, I am particularly proud to have within my constituency some of the oldest and most established Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered civil rights organizations in the United States.

These organizations work tirelessly, despite the triple scourges of racism, homophobia, and taxation without representation which belabor the District of Columbia, to extend, without regard to race, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation and gender those civil and political rights which are taken for granted by some Americans to all Americans, especially those Americans residing within the four quadrants of the District of Columbia.

Today I take particular pleasure in acknowledging the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, one of America's oldest partisan Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered civil rights organizations on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary, this Thursday, June 7, 2001.

In 1976, my constituents, Paul Kuntzler, Richard Mulsby, and Dr. Franklin E. Kameny, founded the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club. Since its founding, the Stein Club has become a powerful and respected participant in the political life of the District of Columbia. The Gertrude Stein Club ceaselessly fights not only for human and civil rights, but for the inclusion and acceptance of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered persons within the political process of the District and the Nation.

The Club's success is reflected among its members who now hold, and have held, responsible government positions. These include: D.C. Councilmember Jim Graham; the Director of the D.C. Office of Boards and Commissions, Ronald Kin; Mayor Anthony Williams's Gay Community Liaison; Philip Pannell, and former White House Counsel Karen Tramontano.

The Gertrude Stein Democratic Club has always been at the forefront of efforts on behalf of human rights, domestic partnership, HIV services, hate crimes, employment non-discrimination,

As part of their 25th anniversary celebration, the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club will honor

two outstanding gay leaders: Andrew Tobias, Treasurer of the Democratic National Committee; and Paul Yandura, Executive Director of the National Stonewall Democratic Federation. Andrew Tobias enjoyed a national reputation for his work in the gay and lesbian community and for the Democratic Party. He is an author and financier who has helped the lives of millions of Americans with his sound financial advice. Mr. Tobias is a true renaissance man and "The Best Little Boy in the World." My constituent, Paul Yandura, despite his youth, is a seasoned veteran of national politics. Mr. Yandura served in the Clinton/Gore Administration, in both political and executive capacities responsible for constituency outreach, public/media relations, event production and he advised the President on a variety of policy issues which included E-Commerce, HIV/AIDS, fair housing and LGBT civil rights.

Mr. Speaker, this week that marks the 25th Anniversary of the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club, also marks the 20th Anniversary of the discernment of an illness which we now know as AIDS. On Friday, June 5, 1981 the Center for Disease Control published in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report an article on five gay angelino men in their late twenties and early thirties who contracted Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia. In the twenty years hence we, both as Americans and as Members of Congress, have been remiss in our duties. While we have passed much legislation, we have failed to enact The Employment Non-Discrimination Act and the Hate Crimes Prevention Act; we have not stopped the dizzying spiral of prescription drug costs, and the District of Columbia still has no voting representation in Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the House both to join me in congratulating the Gertrude Stein Democratic Club on its 25th Anniversary and to join me in re-doubling our efforts to pass the Employment Non-Discrimination and Hate Crimes Prevention Act, to provide affordable access to prescription drugs for all Americans who need them, and to bring some measure of democracy to the citizens of the District of Columbia during this Congress.

INTRODUCTION OF THE TRICARE RETIREES OPPORTUNITY ACT OF 2001

HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

OF MARYLAND
IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Wednesday, June 6, 2001

Mr. CARDIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on the 57th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion of Normandy, to introduce federal legislation that will help military retirees access the health care benefits to which they are entitled. The TRICARE Retirees Opportunity Act will help retirees fully participate in the Department of Defense's (DOD) health care program, TRICARE. Since 1995, DOD has coordinated the medical care efforts of the military branches within TRICARE.

In an effort to fully meet America's promises to the military, last year Congress authorized expanding TRICARE to Medicare-eligible retirees and their dependents. Starting Oct. 1,